

## BRITISH AMERICA.

## THE CANADIAN PACIFIC ROUTE.

THE QUEEN'S HIGHWAY, from Ocean to Ocean, by THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY, is the shortest and most direct route from New York to Vancouver, British Columbia, and to all the great cities of the Pacific coast.

Mr. Cumberland was commissioned in the summer of 1886 by a syndicate of Australasian, Indian and English newspapers to describe the country and the new Canadian Pacific Railway, and under this charge he made the long journey by rail from Vancouver to Halifax, being, as he says, not only the first through passenger, but "positively the first person to go over the line of a journalistic sense." We do not know to what extent Mr. Cumberland accomplished his task. He travelled day and night over the new road, stopping only at Winnipeg. When he reached his destination he seems to have stopped off. Thus while he has been able to describe from personal observation the Pacific terminus of the road at Vancouver, Winnipeg and its neighborhood, and the cities of Vancouver, Montreal, Quebec and Halifax, his knowledge of the Northwest is based on the railroad of the continent to what he could observe from the car windows, or learn from fellow-travelers and other persons with whom he talked on the way. This is not a satisfactory equipment, and when it is added that Mr. Cumberland's information on historical, political and general subjects is in some cases, and that he has no literary gift, our readers will be justified in concluding that he has made a poor book. In point of fact, however, he has succeeded, by main force as it were, in putting together a fairly readable and not useless volume, one of a class of books extensively manufactured in England, which circulate while their subject is fresh and are quickly forgotten.

The island of Vancouver he declares to be a veritable Garden of Eden, and its climate the most delightful in the world. But his experience of the climate seems to have been confined to a few days in July, during which he made pleasant excursions along the shores; and the Garden of Eden, he confesses, has very little arable land, while much of its forest land would not pay for the clearing. The town of Vancouver is not on the island, but at the mouth of a fine inlet on the mainland. Mr. Cumberland arrived there six weeks after it had been totally destroyed by fire and the work of rebuilding was then going on with great energy among the smoking ruins. The terminus of the railway is at Moody, an insignificant place connected by a steamboat route of ninety miles with the real point of arrival and departure, which is Victoria, on Vancouver Island, the capital of the province and the foreign shipping port. Mr. Cumberland writes at some length of the climate and resources of British Columbia, but he does not cite his authorities, and his own opportunities for investigation were, as we have seen, extremely meagre. His estimate of the province is favorable, but he does not believe that it can be adapted to farming on the large scale which is now found most profitable. "It is true that the climate is favorable and that the soil is often very good; but the good spots do not lie close together, they are only here and there and they are surrounded by barren land. The country seems destined therefore to be divided into small holdings and occupied by settlers of moderate ambition. Or a traveler was not agreeably impressed by the aspect of the prairie country of the provinces of Alberta and Assiniboia, and he quotes with sarcasm the testimony of a scientific man to the value of the unpromising looking soil. "It is perfectly correct," he remarks, "that, as compared with the United States, Canada has no really bad lands to speak of, but that she has a good deal of indifferent land no one can deny; and Canada's best friends must admit that a great portion of such land lies in the Northwest Territories." We who remember the States were once hidden under a forest of apparent severity, know how to take the value of these agricultural observations from a railroad train. Mr. Cumberland's recommendations of this prairie country compare queerly with a map at the end of the book in which the same region is marked "Soil good, all fit for settlement." From which we may fairly conclude that he had no hand in making the map, but conveyed it from some source not revealed.

The descriptions of mountain scenery we may pass over, since they are hardly graphic enough to repay quotation. With aid from some very bad process pictures the author conveys some idea of the grandeur and variety of the views and the picturesque of the engineering works which interest the traveler over the western portion of the line; but whether in those respects the Canadian Pacific is more attractive than other routes does not appear from his account. A stay of a few days at Winnipeg seems to have been industriously turned to account, and Mr. Cumberland picked up much interesting information about the operations, past and present, of the Hudson's Bay Company. Among the curious things which he observed here was an experiment in raising tame buffaloes, the herd there numbering 500, to avoid extermination through in-breeding, the owner had tried crossing the buffalo with the domestic cow. The result was highly satisfactory, the cross quickly reverting to the type of the sire and all trace of the cow being lost in the third generation. After leaving Winnipeg Mr. Cumberland enters a region which has been amply described, and we can well afford to let him finish his journey alone. There is really no good reason why his chapters on the Canadian cities should have been written, unless to round out the tour prescribed by the syndicate of newspapers.

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